

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 065695

43

ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

66602

DRAFTED BY: C:RBLACKWILL

APPROVED BY: C:RBLACKWILL

S/S-O:JHOGANSON

----- 075864

O 241635Z MAR 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL HAMBURG IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 065695

FOR SONNENFELDT

NOFORN

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE, SECDEF, OSAF/IL, INFO COPENHAGEN
THE HAGUE, OSLO, PARIS, MARCH 22, FROM BRUSSELS RPTD TO YOU:

QUOTE S E C R E T BRUSSELS 2552

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: MASS, NL, BE

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT

1. THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO BE IN THE LAST STAGE
OF ITS DECISION MAKING PROCESS. MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS
HAVE HAD MANY MEETINGS ON THE F-104 REPLACEMENT IN THE
LAST SEVERAL DAYS. WE ARE GETTING CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS.
SORTING THESE OUT, WE THINK THAT THE SITUATION SHAPES
UP AS FOLLOWS:

2. CONFRONTED WITH AN AMERICAN PRICE SUBSTANTIALLY LOWER
THAN THE FRENCH PRICE, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FRENCH
GOVERNMENT AND DESSAULT DEMANDED THE RIGHT TO SUBMIT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 065695

A NEW OFFER. THE BELGIANS AND THE DUTCH AGREED AND HAVE

MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH THE FRENCH IN THE HAGUE AND BRUSSELS.

3. WE ARE TOLD THAT THE FRENCH HAVE MADE SEVERAL NEW OFFERS IN AN EFFORT TO BEAT OR APPEAR TO BEAT THE PRICE OF THE F-16. THE FIRST NEW OFFER WAS A CLUMSY SLIGHT OF HAND WHICH THE DUTCH AND THE BELGIANS QUICKLY SPOTTED. THE SECOND NEW OFFER APPEARS TO HAVE HAD ELEMENTS OF FLIM-FLAM AND INCREASED GOVERNMENTAL SUBSIDIES. SOME BELGIANS ARE CLAIMING THAT THIS SECOND NEW PRICE IS LOWER THAN THE AMERICAN PRICE; OTHER BELGIANS SAY THAT THE AMERICAN PRICE IS STILL LOWER.

4. ADDITIONAL BELGIAN-DUTCH-FRENCH MEETINGS ARE ANTICIPATED EARLY NEXT WEEK AND THE FRENCH ARE EXPECTED TO BRING THEIR PRICE DOWN FURTHER EITHER BY MANIPULATION OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OR BY INCREASING THEIR SUBSIDIES OR BOTH.

5. THE BELGIAN AND DUTCH MINISTERS OF DEFENSE ARE SCHEDULED TO MEET ON MARCH 24 AND THE BELGIAN AND DUTCH FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS ARE EXPECTED TO MEET ON MARCH 25. THESE MEETINGS ARE IN PREPARATION, ON THE BELGIAN SIDE, FOR A MEETING OF THE INNER CABINET ON MARCH 26.

6. THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE INNER CABINET WILL BE BASED ON A PAPER BEING PREPARED IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. THIS IS THE RUB. THE DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIALS, UNDER THE STERN EYE OF VANDEN BOEYNANTS, CAN BE EXPECTED TO USE A WHOLE BAG OF TRICKS TO PRESENT THE FRENCH CASE IN THE BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT. SUCH A SLANTED, PRESENTATION COULD CHANGE THE OPINIONS OF THOSE MINISTERS LEANING TOWARD THE F-16, PROBABLY ECONOMIC MINISTER OLEFFE AND FINANCE MINISTER DECLERCQ AND POSSIBLY FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE.

7. YESTERDAY WE PROTESTED TO VAN BELLINGHEN, THE CHEF DE CABINET IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, ABOUT THE PROCEDURE BEING FOLLOWED. WE SAID THAT THE U.S. SHOULD BE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 065695

GIVEN EQUAL TIME. WE TOLD HIM THAT WE DID NOT EXPECT THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY LAST MINUTE IMPROVEMENT IN THE U.S. OFFER, WHICH HAD BEEN BASED ON VERY THOROUGH ANALYSIS AND CAREFUL CALCULATIONS
WE WERE CONTENT TO STAND ON OUR OFFER, WHICH WE REGARDED AS EXCELLENT, BUT WE WERE CONCERNED THAT IT WOULD BE DISTORTED IN THE PRESENTATION TO BE MADE BY THE DEFENSE MINISTRY.
WHAT WE ASKED FOR WAS THE RIGHT TO EXAMINE HOW OUR CASE

WAS BEING PRESENTED.

8. VAN BELLINGHEN ADMITTED THAT THE PROCEDURE BEING FOLLOWED WAS UNJUST AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT "THE DEFENSE MINISTRY'S COMPUTERS FUNCTION POORLY". HE SAID HE WOULD THINK ABOUT OUR REQUEST FOR REBUTTAL TIME. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH THIS REQUEST EARLY NEXT WEEK.

9. THE AMBASSADOR IS MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS MONDAY AT 5:00 P.M. WE HAVE THE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS WELL IN HAND. DOES WASHINGTON WANT THE AMBASSADOR TO MAKE A POLITICAL POINT? HE COULD SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE UNITED STATES URGES THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TO MAKE ITS DECISION EXCLUSIVELY ON THE BASIS OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS AND THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD FIND IT HARD TO UNDERSTAND IF A NATO ALLY WERE TO FAIL TO SELECT THE BEST PERFORMING PLAN, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES FOR BELGIUM OF THE F16 ARE GREATER THAN OR, AT THE VERY LEAST, AS GREAT AS THE F-1. THE AMBASSADOR COULD ADD THAT A DECISION TO BUY THE FRENCH PLANE ON EUROPEAN POLITICAL GROUNDS COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE ISOLATIONIST TENDENCIES IN THE U.S. REFERRED TO IN THE PRESIDENT'S NOTRE DAME SPEECH.

10. PLEASE ADVISE. FIRESTONE UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PROCUREMENT, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE065695
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: C:RBLACKWILL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750102-0570
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750321/aaaaaszcz.tel
Line Count: 141
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <22 SEP 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-104 REPLACEMENT
TAGS: MASS, NL, BE, FR, US
To: HAMBURG
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006